

That is a thing which the Government are most reluctant to do, because publishing business is enterprising and in its initial stage in this State. But if things of this sort are done the time would come when Government will have to take away the selling business from those persons and distribute the books through their own official agency.

NEW MEMBER.

Mr. C. O. Karunakaran, Superintendent, Public Health Laboratory took the oath and signed the Rolls.

DISCUSSION ON BUNCHY TOP DISEASE
OF BANANAS (*contd.*).

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR (*Director of Agriculture*): Yesterday I was mentioning to this Honourable House that firstly what is known as the Bunchy top disease of bananas is caused by a virus. Secondly the incubation period of this disease varies from any thing like 3 weeks to 10 weeks with the result that it is impossible to detect whether a particular plant has been effected or not. Thirdly, no cure has been so far found for this disease. All that has been possible for scientists to do is to segregate the area affected and destroy the plants, both healthy and diseased within that area and prohibit the planting of fresh suckers there for a period of one year. Certain measures were adopted in Australia, New South Wales and Queensland where the disease spread widely. The control of this disease in the State first engaged the serious attention of the Applied Biology Sub-Committee. This committee discussed all aspects of the problem at a meeting held on the 5th June and adopted the following resolutions.

- (1) that immediate steps be taken to destroy within the course of four weeks all the plantain trees in the affected area:—
- (2) that the cultivation of plantains in the area be prohibited for a period of one year.
- (3) that other parts of the State be watched to ascertain whether there are any other foci of infection.

These resolutions were duly submitted to the Council of Research at its meeting held on 8th June 1945, and were accepted by the Council. The measures that we have taken so far are only of a palliative nature. I have already indicated that in spite of all the measures taken for the control of the disease, it has not been possible to eradicate it so far. It has spread over an area of roughly 220 sq. miles. On the eastern side, the disease has spread to the borders of the hills. Once the disease gets into the hills and infects the jungle plantains also, the problem of its complete eradication will become practically a super human and impossible task. The situation is some what alarming. Sir, in view of the seriousness of the disease and the extreme urgency of the matter and the colossal loss it is likely to cause if not arrested, I request that the honourable members of this House will kindly lend their support for implementing these resolutions. It is hardly necessary for me to say that unless immediate steps are taken not only will there be total devastation of the beautiful plantain gardens that we have in this country, but also the utter annihilation of this most important industry in the course of two or three decades.